

PATENT APPLICATION

GRIP FOR GOLF PUTTER

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CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/414,169
5 (Attorney Docket No. 018700-000200US) filed September 26, 2002 which is herein
incorporated by reference for all purposes.

STATEMENT AS TO RIGHTS TO INVENTIONS MADE UNDER 10 FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] NOT APPLICABLE

REFERENCE TO A "SEQUENCE LISTING," A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER PROGRAM LISTING APPENDIX SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISK.

15 **[0003]** NOT APPLICABLE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0004] The present invention relates to a grip for a golf club, and more particularly, to a
20 grip for a golf putter.

2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] The art of golf putters has been extremely well-developed since the game was first
developed centuries ago. Various materials have been used for golf club shafts, ranging from
25 hickory and willow to metals and space age technology graphite reinforced resin composites.
At the present time, most golf club shafts are made of steel that is then chrome plated and a
rubber or composition grip is then glued to the shaft. Steel shafts are usually continuously
tapered or step-tapered from a thin tip end to the handle or butt end and are designed with
flexibility characteristics for wood or iron head clubs intended to be swung for full or partial

shots rather than for putters. These same steel shafts are then cut down to a length appropriate for putter shafts.

[0006] Ingenuous golf putter developments in the past have resulted in various configurations, including those having single and double bend steel shafts; straight steel shafts with or without fluting over a portion of their length; and straight shafts made of other materials, such as fiberglass or graphite composites and alloys. Apart from special bends or fluting, most shafts used in prior art putters are ordinary steel shafts not specially constructed for putter use. The butt or handle ends of these shafts generally have a circular cross-section having a typical diameter in the range of from 0.580-0.600 inches for receiving a grip of rubber or leather or other non-slip, generally soft material. The exterior grip configuration may vary within the Official Rules Of Golf. However, it is generally most desirable to have a grip configuration that complies with the dimensions outlined by the Official Rules Of Golf as promulgated by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and the United States Golf Association (hereinafter "R & A standards and rules"). A copy of the Rules Of Golf For Design Of Clubs is attached as Appendix A.

[0007] In direct contrast with golf club shafts intended for woods and irons, where achieving maximum distance is one of the major objectives accomplished by cocking of the wrists on the back swing and uncorking or release of the wrists on the down swing to generate high club head speed, putters should have stiff shafts and the golfer's wrists preferably should not break when executing a putting stroke. A good putting stroke is quite the opposite in that it is accepted wisdom in teaching circles that the golfer should not cock or break his wrists during the putting stroke. Instead, the triangle formed by a golfer's shoulders and arms is generally kept in a constant configuration to control speed and direction of the putt. This suggests that the ideal putter should have characteristics that assist the golfer in keeping his wrists stiff or firmly locked when putting. Accordingly, the handle should be configured (preferably in conformity with R & A standards and rules) to assist the golfer in keeping his wrists firm during the putting stroke.

[0008] "Letting the club do the work" doesn't apply to putting. Since centrifugal force has little relevance in a putter's stroke, in comparison to other golf shots, it is particularly difficult for the golfer to keep the putter club head square on the correct path to the hole for the entire swing of the club. If the golfer has any doubt about the trajectory of the club head, he will try to correct the path or the angle of the club head during the stroke. This doubt is natural since

it is the result of visual bearings that are frequently contradictory in the golfer's mind to the location of the hole. Accordingly, negative side effects will be produced by the fingers, the hands, the wrists, or by any other part of the body when the golfer attempts to address his concerns about the trajectory of the club head. Thus, a pendulum stroke is widely accepted as being the best way to strike a ball on the putting green.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] A grip for a golf club in accordance with the present invention addresses the shortcomings of the prior art.

[0010] In accordance with the present invention, a grip for a club that includes a shaft defining a longitudinal axis and a club head having a club face comprises an elongated body that extends along a major axis corresponding to the longitudinal axis defined by the shaft. The body has a front side, an opposing back side, a right portion and a left portion. The front side is substantially flat at the right portion and at the left portion. The back side has a substantially rounded or triangular shape. The body defines an elongated cross-section that extends along a transverse axis that is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis and transverse to the club face.

[0011] Alternatively, both the front and back sides are substantially flat but with slight curves and rounded edges such that the grip has a substantially elliptical shape.

[0012] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, the grip further comprises a recess for receiving the shaft to thereby connect the grip to the shaft.

[0013] In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the recess extends substantially throughout the body between the right portion and the left portion.

[0014] In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the grip is integral with the shaft.

[0015] In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, the grip includes rounded edges.

[0016] In accordance with a further aspect of the present invention, the grip includes sharp edges.

[0017] In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, the grip has dimensions that comply with R & A standards and rules for putter grips.

[0018] In accordance with a further embodiment of the present invention, a club comprises a shaft defining a longitudinal axis, a club head having a club face and being connected to a distal end of the shaft, and a grip connected to a proximal end of the shaft. The grip comprises an elongated body that extends along a major axis corresponding to the longitudinal axis defined by the shaft. The body has a front side and an opposing back side. The front side is substantially flat, while the back side has a substantially rounded or triangular shape. The body defines an elongated cross-section that extends along a transverse axis that is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis and transverse to the club face.

[0019] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, the club is a golf putter and the grip has dimensions that comply with R & A standards and rules for putter grips.

[0020] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a method of gripping a club grip comprises providing a club having a grip, placing thumbs of a user adjacent edges on a front surface of the grip such that there is space between the thumbs, and curling at least one finger of a right hand of the user adjacent at least one finger of the left hand of the user along a back surface of the grip.

[0021] Accordingly, the present invention provides a grip for a golf putter having that allows a golfer to minimize putter jerks and "yipes" and promotes a better pendulum stroke for more accuracy.

[0022] Other features and advantages of the present invention will be understood upon reading and understanding the detailed description of the preferred exemplary embodiments, found hereinbelow, in conjunction with reference to the drawings, in which like numerals represent like elements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0023] Figures 1A-D illustrate a grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0024] Figures 2A-E illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0025] Figures 3A-E illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0026] Figures 4A-D illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0027] Figure 5 is an end elevation view of a golfer's hands gripping a grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0028] Figure 6A is a perspective view of a putter that includes a grip in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

5 [0029] Figure 6B is a perspective view of a golf putter that includes a grip in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

[0030] Figures 7A-C illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention;

[0031] Figures 8A-C illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention; and

[0032] Figures 9A-C illustrate another grip in accordance with the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0033] While the present invention is generally intended for use with golf putters, and for simplicity and clarity will be described herein as such, it is to be understood that such a grip
15 may have use, for various purposes, with other golf clubs and similar items, such as mallets for croquet and other similar games. Thus, the term club as used herein includes golf clubs, golf putters, mallets and the like.

[0034] Turning to Figure 1A, a grip 10 is illustrated. The grip is connected to a shaft 11 of a club. Shaft 11 defines a longitudinal axis indicated by dashed line L. Grip 10 comprises an
20 elongated body 12 that extends along a major axis, represented by dashed line M, corresponding substantially to the longitudinal axis L. Body 12 includes a front side 13, an opposing back side 14, a right portion 15 and a left portion 16.

[0035] As can be seen in Figures 1B and 1C, front side 13 is substantially flat, while back side 14 is substantially round or circular in cross-section. Body 12 defines an elongated
25 cross-section that extends along a transverse axis T. As can be seen in Figures 1B and 1C, body 12 preferably includes rounded edges 17, 18. This provides for greater comfort for the golfer's hands when gripping grip 10. Obviously, body 12 could have "sharp" edges. Such a configuration may improve a golfer's grip when gripping grip 10.

[0036] As can be seen in Figures 1A and 1D, shaft 11 includes a recess 20 that receives
30 grip 10, thus connecting grip 10 to shaft 11. Grip 10 may extend within as long a portion of

the shaft as may be desired. Of course, grip 10 can extend along the entire length of the shaft, thereby forming the shaft, if it is so desired, such that grip 10 is integral with the shaft as illustrated in Figures 6A and 6B. In such a configuration, the integrated grip/shaft may extend in its shape, such as is illustrated in Figure 6A, or may have a tapered shape wherein the integrated grip/shaft is narrower adjacent the club head of the club and wider at a distal portion such that the distal portion has a shape corresponding to that which is illustrated in Figure 1A for gripping by a golfer.

[0037] As may be seen in Figures 2B, 2D and 2E, a recess 20 may be provided that extends within the grip 10. This type of arrangement may be used with all of the grips disclosed herein.

[0038] Figures 2A-E illustrate another embodiment wherein grip front side 13 is substantially flat and grip back side 14 has a substantially triangular shape, such that the grip has a substantially triangular cross-section.

[0039] Figures 3A-E and Figures 4A-D illustrate further embodiments wherein the grip back side has a substantially round shape so that the grip has a substantially semi-circular cross-section. These embodiments have a slightly larger diameter than the embodiment in Figures 1A-D, and illustrate the shaft having a recess for receiving the grip, or the grip having a recess for receiving the shaft. As may be seen in Figures 3B-D, this embodiment is configured such that shaft 11 is relatively close to back side 14 while the embodiment illustrated in Figures 4B-D is configured such that the shaft is relatively close to front side 13.

[0040] Recess 20 is preferably configured to fit over current, standard putter shafts. Most putters currently have round rubber or leather grips. These round grips may be removed and replaced with a grip 10 in accordance with the present invention by placing shaft 11 within recess 20. Alternatively, when a putter is being manufactured, a grip 10 in accordance with the present invention may be placed on the putter shaft by placing shaft 11 within recess 20 during the putter manufacturing process.

[0041] Figures 6A and 6B illustrate a grip 10 with a putter 30. Putter 30 includes shaft 11 and club head 31. Club head 31 includes club face 32. Figure 6A illustrates an embodiment where the grip extends the entire length of the shaft and thus, the grip may constitute the shaft such that the grip and shaft are integral. Figure 6B likewise illustrates where the shaft and grip are one piece such that they are integral. However, with the embodiment illustrated in Figure 6B, the grip portion 10 tapers into a rounded more traditional shaft portion 11.

[0042] The transverse axis T is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis L and major axis M. Likewise, the transverse axis T is substantially transverse to the club face 32 of the club head 31. Such a configuration provides for substantial stiffness within the grip, and thereby the club, with respect to the motion of swinging the club in order to strike a ball.

5 [0043] Turning to Figure 5, a method of gripping grip 10 is illustrated. A golfer places his right thumb 21 adjacent his left thumb 22 on the front side 13 of the grip 10 as can be seen in Figure 5. As may be seen in Figure 5, the golfer places the fingers 23 of one hand along back side 14 of grip 10 and the fingers 24 of the other hand over fingers 23. Preferably, all of the fingers 23 and fingers 24 are placed along back side 14. However, the golfer may, depending
10 upon comfort and preference, only place one, two or three of his fingers along the back side. Additionally, index fingers 23A, 24A may have varying degrees of placement, and indeed, may even be extended longitudinally in a substantially straightened manner along grip 10 if so desired.

[0044] With respect to Figure 10, an alternative method of gripping grip 10 illustrated in
15 Figures 7-9 is illustrated. A golfer places his right thumb 21 adjacent his left thumb 22 on the front side 13 of the grip 10 as can be seen in Figure 10, but with space therebetween. As may be seen in Figure 5, the golfer places the fingers 23 of one hand along back side 14 of grip 10 and the fingers 24 of the other hand over fingers 23. Preferably, all of the fingers 23 and fingers 24 are placed along back side 14. However, the golfer may, depending upon comfort
20 and preference, only place one, two or three of his fingers along the back side. Additionally, index fingers 23A, 24A may have varying degrees of placement, and indeed, may even be extended longitudinally in a substantially straightened manner along grip 10 if so desired.

[0045] Figures 7A-C illustrate an embodiment wherein the grip has a substantially elliptical shape. Thus, both front and back sides 13, 14 are fairly flat but are slightly curved. Edges 17
25 and 18 are rounded. For this embodiment, shaft 11 is tapered within grip recess 30, thus allowing the grip to be thinner in cross-section.

[0046] Figures 8A-C illustrate an embodiment wherein the grip has a substantially half elliptical shape. Thus, front side 13 is substantially flat and back side 14 is rounded. As may be seen in Figure 8A, the grip is slightly bent and than is placed around shaft 11, which
30 thereby gives the grip its shape. Thus, as may be seen in Figure 8B, the shaft slightly protrudes through the grip when the grip is placed upon the shaft.

[0047] Figures 9A-C illustrate an embodiment wherein the grip has a substantially elliptical shape. However, the shaft is a rounded golf shaft that is thicker at the proximal end and tapers to the distal end as is known in the industry, and thus, the grip is thicker to accommodate the shaft within recess 20. Thus, both front and back sides 13, 14 are more rounded in comparison to the embodiment illustrated in Figures 7A-C.

[0048] The grips disclosed herein preferably comply with the dimensions outlined by the Official Rules Of Golf as promulgated by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and the United States Golf Association (hereinafter "R & A standards and rules"). The exterior grip configuration may vary within the Official Rules Of Golf, however. Generally, the overall diameter D may not exceed approximately 1 and 3/4 inches. The designs illustrated in the figures generally have a thickness TH in a range of 1 inch to 1 and 1/2 inches.

[0049] Accordingly, the present invention provides grips for a club, and in particular, a golf putter, that improves the pendulum swing desired during the putting stroke. The golfer feels the putter head at the opposing end of the putter since only the fingers are in contact with the grip and fingers are generally more sensitive than the palm of one's hand.

[0050] As stated previously, the flatness of the front side of the grip is generally transverse or perpendicular to the face of the club head and thus, parallel to the line of the putt. This unique feature allows the golfer to maintain his swing plane or swing path. This provides the golfer with confidence in his perception of the putting line and minimizes the importance of the hole position in relation to the putting line. Thus, the golfer can trust perceptions that are not purely visual.

[0051] Finally, the relatively small volume of the putter grip ensures a "strong" grip. This strong grip makes the wrists naturally passive. With the wrists naturally passive, this encourages the golfer to initiate the swing with his arms, or better, with his shoulders, as opposed to initiating the swing with his hands and wrists.

[0052] Although the invention is being described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments, it will be appreciated that it is intended to cover all modifications and equivalents within the scope of the appended claims.